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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 17 February 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to the statement made by the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization on 16 February 2006. The meeting, which was headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, considered many important matters concerning issues on the national and international agenda of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority. Among the issues discussed, the Committee condemned the plans by the Government of Israel to isolate Al-Aghwar (the Jordan Valley) area from the rest of the West Bank and highlighted the dangerous implications such a plan has for the achievement of peace in the region.

In this regard, Israel, the occupying Power, has instituted a regime of permits and severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley. It seems apparent that Israel is attempting to annex this area by creating a situation in the Jordan Valley almost identical to that of the "seam zone" between the unlawful wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and the Green Line. In fact, this week, Israel, the occupying Power, has begun in earnest the construction of the "eastern wall" in the Jordan Valley which will completely enclose the West Bank within a de facto open-air prison.

The severe restrictions of movement imposed by the occupying Power prohibit some 2 million Palestinian residents of the West Bank from entering the Jordan Valley area, which constitutes around one third of the total area of the West Bank. This has resulted in the disenfranchisement and the disappearance of Palestinians from the Valley, with the exception of a few thousand who live there. Moreover, thousands of the Palestinian residents of the neighbouring towns and villages in the northern West Bank, some only a few kilometres away, are absent from the Valley, even though their families and friends reside there. Even more tragic, Palestinians who have farmland in the Valley or are employed in agriculture in the area have been robbed of their only means of livelihood.

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In this regard, the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization stated that such expansionist designs by Israel, including the continuation of settlement expansion in Occupied East Jerusalem and the building of its wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, are destroying any chance to achieve a just and permanent peace in the Middle East. The Committee further went on to state that "the Israeli plan transforms Palestinian land into isolated cantons, preventing the establishment of an independent Palestinian State". The Committee urged the Quartet, the authors of the "road map to peace", to assume its responsibilities towards the peace process and compel Israel to cease its expansion into the Jordan Valley, as well as all other actions working against the achievement of peace on the basis of the two-State solution.

It is also important to highlight that during the same meeting, the Executive Committee welcomed the free and fair elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council and congratulated the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, for their commitment to democracy. The Committee further indicated that the election results do not represent a departure from the positions and agreements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority. This includes international and various Arab summit resolutions, the provisions of international law, international conventions, United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and the political programme set out by the Palestine Liberation Organization, which includes the road map, the Arab initiative adopted in Beirut in 2002 and all the agreements signed with Israel. As such, in his statement before the first meeting of the new Palestinian Legislative Council, President Abbas is expected to underline the above-mentioned elements and state his expectation that all agreements will be fully respected and honoured by the new Cabinet.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations